

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 10782 181103Z
ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 10782

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, TH , SN, MY
SUBJ: BRIEFING FOR JAN AF SILLEN, SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICIAL

REF: STOCKHOLM 1849 (NOTAL)

1. AS REQUESTED IN REFTEL DCM AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR
MET MAY 13 WITH JAN AF SILLEN, SWEDISH FOREIGN MINISTRY
OFFICAL ON VISIT TO BANGKOK, KUALA LUMPUR, AND SINGAPORE.
DCM HAD PREVIOUSLY MET SILLEN AT LUNCH HOSTED BY SWEDISH
AMBASSADOR OBERG, BUT SIZE OF GROUP ON THAT OCCASION WAS
NOT RPT NOT CONDUCIVE TO USEFUL DISCUSSION.

2. WE REVIEWED THAI INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SITUATION,
NOTING STRONG POSITION HELD BY MILITARY-BACKED ROYAL THAI
GOVERNMENT, THOUGH NOT EXCLUDING POSSIBILITY THAT THERE
COULD BE CHANGES IN THAI CABINET AND EVEN REPLACEMENT
OF PRIME MINISTER. SUCH CHANGES WOULD, HOWEVER, BE
UNLIKELY TO ALTER GENERAL CONSERVATIVE ORIENTATION OF
RTG. COMMUNIST-LED INSURGENCY IS NOT YET A SERIOUS
PROBLEM TO THAILAND, THOUGH IT COULD BECOME SO,
PARTICULARLY IF IT IS PROVIDED WITH SUBSTANTIAL EXTERNAL
SUPPORT BY THAILAND'S COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. THAI ECONOMIC
AND TRADING POSITION ARE STRONG, AND HOMOGENOUS CHARACTER
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OF THAI POPULATION IS A SUBSTANTIAL ADVANTAGE. WE REVIEWED
THAILAND'S ONLY PARTLY-SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE
RELATIONS AND ITS GENERALLY GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS ASEAN
PARTNERS AND BURMA.

3. FOR HIS PART SILLEN WAS GENERALLY BALANCED IN HIS COM-
MENTS, THOUGH HE EXPRESSED THE USUAL SWEDISH DISLIKE FOR

MILITARY-BACKED REGIMES. MORE STRIKINGLY, HE ASKED OUR VIEW AS TO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE COMMUNIST-LED INSURGENCY GREW CONSIDERABLY AND VIET-NAM FELT ITSELF CONSTRAINED, "AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE" TO PROVIDE RELATIVELY LARGE-SCALE SUPPORT FOR THE THAI INSURGENTS. HE SEEMED TO SUGGEST THAT SUCH A SITUATION WOULD JUSTIFY VIETNAMESE INTERVENTION IN THAILAND. WE COMMENTED THAT THIS WOULD RAISE VERY SERIOUS ISSUES OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND SECURITY, AND SILLEN DID NOT RPT NOT PRESS POINT FURTHER.

4. COMMENT: WHILE SILLEN'S VIEWS WERE MODERATE IN TONE, WE FELT HE REFLECTED THE STRONG OPINIONS HELD BY SWEDISH AMBASSADOR OBERG, WHO SPENDS MUCH OF HIS TIME IN VIENTIANE (WHERE HE IS ALSO ACCREDITED) AND IS QUITE SYMPATHETIC TO THE SRV, DUE APPARENTLY TO EARLIER SERVICE IN HANOI. WE WERE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED THAT SILLEN PRESENTED WHAT APPEARED TO BE A JUSTIFICATION FOR LARGE-SCALE VIETNAMESE INTERVENTION IN THE THAI INSURGENCY, USING THE EXCUSE OF SUPPORT FOR A FRATERNAL COMMUNIST PARTY.
WHITEHOUSE

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